A MANUSCRIPT TREATISE ON THE COINAGE BY JOHN PRYSE, 1553.

My attention was drawn to the existence of this treatise in the library of New College, Oxford (MS. 317, iii.), by a note in Wood's 'Athenae.' I desire to express my sense of the very great kindness of the authorities of the college who allowed me the fullest facilities for examining it.

The author of the treatise is John Pryse, whom we may fairly, though not certainly, assume to be Sir John Price,¹ or Ap Rice, of the Priory, Brecon, the well-known civilian and visitor of the monasteries. In the course of the manuscript he mentions that he has written a larger treatise on the currency, but it has unfortunately not been preserved. This shorter work consists of an address to the queen, an exposition of general principles, a statement of the evils of debasement and of the condition of the coinage in 1553, and a careful consideration of the best means of reform. It is hoped to deal separately with the detailed information which Pryse gives in connexion with other evidence of the same kind, but his 'foundations,' as he calls them, are best set out by themselves. They may with advantage be compared with the speculations on economic theory contained in the dialogue on 'The Common Weal of this Realm of England' (1549, edited by Miss Lamond and Dr. Cunningham).

W. A. J. ARCHBOLD.

Things to be taken for sure grounds about the restitution of the coin :

First : that like as no prince can set price of any wares to endure for any time, no more can he bring to pass that his coin shall be better esteemed specially any long time, than the goodness of the metal that the coin is made of doth require, because every realm must have traffic with other, and metals have their prices set certain, one above an other in their degrees through the whole world, as one portion of gold is worth twelve times as much silver, one of silver is worth one hundred and forty parts of tin and quicksilver, and of brass two hundred and twenty parts, and of lead eight hundred parts and of iron one thousand two hundred and eighty parts or therabout most commonly, but as the finer of every sort of these is somewhat dearer than the rest, so are they all better cheap, where they be digged, and where they be plentiful than elsewhere. And albeit base coin of coarse metal hath for a season sometime been reputed as good as fine silver, that was like as a man that taketh a counterfeit groat as good as a true, or a counterfeit diamond for a true, till he know it, and then esteemeth it as it is worthy. And if a prince might value his money at his pleasure, then might he provide that there should never be dearth of anything in his realm, but as the price of corn, or other thing doth rise, he might rise likewise the price of his money.

Then it must be confessed that money is the common measure of all things that are vendible and like as one metal is esteemed by an other as

¹ See an account of him in the *Dictionary of National Biography*.

afore is declared, so are other things vendible esteemed and measured by the metal, that the money which is given for it is made of.

Also that the coin or print of the money is but as a seal or a mark that should testify what quantity and goodness every piece should bear and contain, as some names of money, yet kept in use in the English tongue do declare as a pound of sterling money was also a pound in weight. . . .

This must be taken also for confessed that as the coin is abased the price of all things that are vendible must and do arise after the same portion that the coin is so abased, if it be more, more, if it be less, less. And that there is two ways of abasing the coin one by mixture of base metal with fine, and to utter it as though it were all fine, which is the deceit that is imputed to these alchemists. The other is by giving less weight of good metal in the coin, than the nature, name and credit of that coin doth require, which is much like as if the clerk of the market, would put the King's seal to a less bushel or to any other measure or weight, than that which was used and allowed beforetime.

Also it must be confessed that these two last faults are now comprehended and known universally to be in our coin both baseness of metal in the mixed coin and less weight in the fine, than the name which it beareth doth require by one part in three.

And yet besides that, one other fault as great as any of them, that is lack of equivalence in the coin current, forasmuch as one testoon is better than another the fine new coin better than the base universally, and yet all at one estimate in the market, which inequality is cause of much robbing of the treasure of the realm, while the best money is ever picked, and carried over, and the worst only left us. . . .

It must be therefore confessed for the causes aforesaid that therefore there is given for our coin now of any wares outward or inward, not after the name that our coin doth bear, but after the value of the metal that is in it (as in things bought beyond sea doth well appear) for as in ten shillings of our money now, there is but two oz. of silver which was before in twenty groats sterling so ye have but so much ware for your ten shillings now, as you had for twenty sterling groats before. And though it be so well of wares bought beyond sea, as of men that esteem things rightly, yet for most things bought within the realm, ye pay more than after that rate, over that ye were wont to pay, when sterling was at ten groats the oz : as if ye peruse and confer the old and new prices of a pig, goose, capon, chicken, and of all other victual for horse and man, ye shall soon perceive, which is by reason our people think our money yet worse than it is in deed. And so in more discredit with them than the right value of it doth require which is long of the baseness of the said coin, which being depured, would take away that discredit and bring all men to esteem the coin at the least ways at no less value than the stuff thereof did require. Also this can not be denied, but that it were better for all men to have this coin, once called to his right name correspondent to his just value, though there were once some loss to be borne therein whereby men should be ever after assured that they should have no less therefor than the name thereof doth purport than as they be now to be daily and yearly deceived the third part in every piece or sum that they receive. . . .

PRICES AT WOODSTOCK IN 1604.

It is generally assumed by the economic historian that with the decline of the gild system, with more rapid circulation of money, and with wider opportunities for the use of capital, prices gradually came to be fixed by competition rather than by custom or definite regulation, and that, with the exception of labour and of bread, this change was complete by the Tudor period. There is, however, a good deal of evidence to show that public control and regulation, acting through the central or through the local authority, to which power was delegated for the purpose, continued to be a common feature in some directions during Tudor and Stuart times, and covered a wider range than food, although this is the commodity of which, as might be expected, we hear most. Professor Ashley, in speaking of the sixteenth century, points to 'the general cessation of the attempt to assess victuals' as 'conclusive evidence of the diminishing vigour of municipal life;' ¹ and elsewhere, when dealing with the loss by the gilds of power to fix the prices of wares, ² he implies that such prices were henceforth unregulated. From this view I find myself obliged to dissent, for it would be possible to show that in every one of the victualling crafts, and in the case of some raw materials and some manufactured commodities, prices were frequently regulated during the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries by the state, which acted sometimes through the central, sometimes through the local municipal authority. Of the general enforcement of such regulation it is difficult to speak with certainty. The presence or absence of indictments can be used as an argument in favour of effective action or the contrary, but there is a fair amount of evidence to show that the local authorities in many different places, in connexion with many different commodities, endeavoured to maintain such regulation as had been laid down either by the

¹ *Econ. Hist.* pt. ii. p. 47.

² *Ibid.* p. 160. This loss of power Professor Ashley attributes to 19 Hen. VII, c. 7. But the preamble to that statute, in laying stress on the 'unreasonable ordinances, as well in prices of wages as other things,' definitely refers to 15 Hen. VI, c. 6. By this earlier act the crafts were to make 'none other ordinance of charge if it be not first discussed and approved for good and reasonable by the justices of the peace and the governors of cities and towns, and before them entered of record.' This was enacted 'to endure as long as it shall please . . . the king.' Thus the crafts as early as 1436 lost independent control over prices for a time; the expiration of 15 Hen. VI, c. 6, and the evil results which followed are stated as reasons for renewed legislation in 1504. By 19 Hen. VII, c. 7, the crafts are, in general terms, forbidden to make any ordinances without the sanction of the chancellor, treasurer, and some justices of either bench, or before the justices on circuit. But there is nothing in the later statute which would seem to mark 'a most significant departure' on the part of parliament, for earlier legislation had already robbed the gilds of supreme control in the matter of prices, and the main difference between the two acts is one of detail, as to whether supervision shall be exercised by central or by local authority. In neither case is there any suggestion that parliament intended to leave individuals freedom in the matter.

central or by the local authority, in any particular direction. In this matter of regulation there seems to be but little change during the Tudor and early Stuart period from the practice of an earlier time, of which, as of the later period, it would be difficult to prove that regulation of prices was universal, or that it was always rigidly enforced.

The following statements of prices as presented by the jurors of the royal borough of Woodstock in the 'Curia Assisarum' of 1604 is of some interest in this connexion, and indicates how minute were the details which came before such a court.³ Thus the price of a single or of a double bed, of a feather bed or a flock bed, by the night or by the week, is a matter upon which sworn information is given, and which apparently cannot be left for private settlement by individuals.⁴ Mr. Adolphus Ballard, town clerk of Woodstock, to whom readers of this Review are indebted for the communication of the document, tells me that copies of thirteen assizes of bread and ale are to be found among the Woodstock records, but this is the only one of a more comprehensive character. The document is, indeed, incomplete as an assize, for no note is made fixing future rates,⁵ but it is not unreasonable to infer that in this, as in cases where bread and ale were dealt with in the same court,⁶ sworn information was given with a view to authoritative regulation⁷ by the mayor, who acted as clerk of the market.⁸ Regulation of this kind was still sufficiently common to warrant the suggestion that we probably have another case here. The desire to keep down unreasonable prices in the interests of travellers comes out in various instances, and this may account for some of the elaborate details enumerated in the Woodstock document. Thus the maximum price of a meal was carefully fixed at Norwich in 1569,⁹ and at a

³ They were hardly less trivial than the fixing by statute of a maximum price for a nightcap, 21 Hen. VIII, c. 9.

⁴ The North Riding sessions frequently dealt with cases in the seventeenth century when innkeepers kept fewer beds than the court had stipulated to be necessary for the practice of their calling. In 1581 the Manchester Court Leet directed a jury to search all inns, and to certify to the steward 'what beddinge they have . . . also to viewe what rowmes and stablinge they have . . . and whether they have kept the assyse : . . . *factum est.*'—*Manchester Court Leet Records*, i. p. 219.

⁵ Unless the words 'every man . . . to pay for his meale vjd.,' and 'the owner of the same horse to paye,' imply regulation.

⁶ The assize of bread and ale for 1628, printed by Mr. Ballard in his *Chronicles of Woodstock*, p. 140, is a good instance. The prices of wheat are quoted, and the mayor then proceeded to set the assize.

⁷ Such consultation with persons possessing special knowledge was common before changes of price were made. In the case of labour, the justices were instructed by 5 Eliz. c. 4 to call together 'discrete and grave persons,' and to confer with them respecting plenty or scarcity and 'other circumstances necessary to be considered' before fixing wages.

⁸ *Chron. of Woodstock*, p. 55.

⁹ 'Whereas There hath bene complaynte made to Mr. Mayor and to the Justices of the greate excessyve charges y^e Gentylnen Sarvingmen and other Travilors be at

much later date in London. In 1633 we hear of measures taken by the central authority, acting both directly and indirectly: of these it may not be out of place to make mention, as they bear on the general question as well as on the special charges of inn-holders. A proclamation published by the lord mayor in 1633 illustrates clearly what could still be done in London by authoritative regulation.¹⁰ From it we learn that the lord mayor and aldermen were enjoined by the privy council to 'set such prices as they should conceiue to be fit for all small Acates and other prouisions, and to set up the same in publike Tables . . . & also should vary them from time to time as they should find just cause.' This the civic authority did, 'streightly charging and commanding . . . that euery person do obey and keep as well the said prices, as all other prices that shall from time to time hereafter be set and appointed by the said Lord Mayor for any prouision of Victuall whatsoever.' The rates of maximum prices which follow are less exhaustive than we should expect, and deal with all kinds of poultry and eggs; this is explained by the fact that the high price of poultry is definitely mentioned as an intolerable grievance that required attention. The privy council are said

to have taken care to reforme many abuses . . . as the excessiue number of Tavernes, and the extortions used in the immoderate prices of all sorts of prouisions in Ordinaries and Hosteleries; and finding that the said abuse hath appeared in nothing more than in the excessiue rates of Poultry of all sorts being so unreasonably enhaunsed by Poulterers and Higleers have signified the command, &c.

In the same year we find that the attorney-general was instructed to study the laws and statutes concerning prices of victuals and horsemeat, and to consult with the judges. This was done, a report was drawn up and presented to the Star Chamber; a decree was then drafted, in accordance with the recommendations made,¹¹ which in the following month was confirmed by letters patent.¹² Definite prices are laid down:

when they have any occasion to resorte to this Cittie aswell for ther dyetts at ther oster howses or at other victualing howses as for ther horses meate and gresse for ther horses Therfor this daye by the hole conceite and advice of this howse yt ys ordeyned and agreed for the Reformaçon therof that No Inkeper nor Victuler Dwelling within this Cittie shall from this daye tyll the Feaste of the byrthe of our Lorde next comyng Take any more money for a dynner or a Supper of any body then iiijd., and to provide for them porrage or Sew (?) with bafe or Mutton boyled and a stroke of Sūme kynde of Boste and no more. And that from the sayde Feaste of the byrthe of the Lorde tyll Ester then next followyng to take vd. for a mele and no more and the dyett to be as before ys declaryd savyng in Lente. And that no Inkepar nor other y^e use to take horse to graspe within this Cittie from this Daye till the sayde Feaste of the byrthe of our Lorde next comyng shall take above iijd. the daye and nyght for a horse and y^e he tarry but a nyght then to take iijd. a nyght for a horse and no more. *Court Book 8 (1562-1569), under 7 June, 6 Eliz. p. 209.*

¹⁰ *Brit. Mus. Harl.* 1008, f. 43.

¹¹ *Foedera*, xix. 476.

¹² *Ibid.* p. 479.

We wish that Ordinaries in and about London may be regulated to a convenient summe, not to exceed two shillings for a meal. . . . six pence day & night for Hay for a Horse, and for Oats six pence a peck Winchester measure, is a competent rate to be taken by Innholders & to take nothing for Litter. . . . for Horses which come to Inns in the day time we conceive it to be a reasonable rate for the Innekeeper to take a penny for a horse for his stable room only, the horse not being unbridled: if he be unbridled and have hay and go away the same day to take two pence the horse and no more.¹²

These rates were made general for the whole kingdom, and 'where Grain and Hay are sold at lesser prices there the rates and prices shall be accordingly . . . until it shall be made to appear . . . to the Justices of the Peace that because of the increase of prices in the parts adjoining greater rates are necessarily to be permitted.'

Of almost every article mentioned in the Woodstock document it would be possible to quote instances of regulation during the Tudor and Stuart periods, scattered about in the statute book or in municipal records, but so far as I know there is no single list which is as full as the following statement, drawn up with a view to regulation of prices by the local authority at Woodstock in 1604.

ELLEN A. McARTHUR.

Burgus nove Woodstock } Curia Assissarum dñi Regis clirici Mercatus burgi
in Com Oxon } predicti ibidem tenta vicesimo die Augustii
Anno regni dñi nři Jacobi Regis Anglie
secundo et Scocie Tricesimo Octavo Annoque
dñi 1604 coram ven^{li} viro Willo Meatcalfe
generoso maiore Burgi predicti.

Noia Juf	} Johes Raunson Rad Bradshewe Will ^{ms} Ball Richard Wrighte Michael Nursse Johes Lowe Will ^{ms} Edwards	Alex Headd	} Juf
pro Dño Rege		Fraunc Carter	
		Will ^{ms} Wells	
		Timoth ^o Walker	
		Thomas Screeven	
		Johes Batt	
		Ricus Shadd	

Qui presentant super eorum sacramentum modo et forma sequente.

Imprimis a quarter of the beste wheate cleene & sweete in the markett	} xxij ^s xviij ^s vjd xviij ^s
Itm a quart second wheate in y ^e mkett	
It a qter third wheate in the markett	

¹² This is a considerable advance on the price at Woodstock in 1604. Fynes Moryson, whose *Itinerary* was published in 1617, lays great stress on the excellence and cheapness of English inns as compared with those of the continent. For eating 'at an ordinarie table together where they had great plentie of good meate, and especially of choice kinds of fish, each man paid no more than 6d. & sometimes but 4d. a meale. . . . One horses meate will come to twelve pence, or eighteen pence, the night for Hay, Oates and Straw, and in Summer time commonly they put the horses to grasse after the rate of three pence each horse.'—*Itinerary*, pt. iii. p. 61.

Itm a q ^l best Mawlte cleene & sweete in the markett	xiiij ^s iiij ^d
It a q ^l second Mawlte in the Markett	xij ^s
It a q ^l beanes or pease in y ^e m ^k ett	xij ^s
It a q ^{ter} beste oates in the markett	vj ^s
It a busshell of the same oates in e ^v ye house	xiiij ^d
It a kilderkin of good Ale or dubble beere w th carriage	iiij ^s iiij ^d
It a kilderkin single Ale or beere w th carriadge	xviiij ^d
It a full q ^{te} beste ale or beere w th in & w th out e ^v ye house	j ^d
It a full q ^{te} single Ale or beere w th in & w th out e ^v ye house	oh
It a pownde of Butter sweete and newe in the markett	ij ^d oo
It Tenn Eggs the best in y ^e m ^k ett	ij ^d
It iiij of the same Eggs in e ^v ye house	j ^d
It a stone beste beefe at the Butcher's, weighing viii lb	xiiij ^d
It a stone seconde beefe at the butcher's	xij ^d
It a q ^{ter} beste Veale at the butcher's	xx ^d
It a q ^{ter} second Veale at the butcher's	xviiij ^d
It a q ^l beste weather Mutton at the butchers	ij ^s
It a q ^l second Mutton at the butchers	xvj ^d
It a fatt goose the beste in the m ^k ett	x ^d
It a fatt pygg the best in the m ^k ett	xvj ^d
It a leane or second pigg in the m ^k ett	x ^d
It a coople of Caponetts the best in y ^e m ^k ett	xvj ^d
It a coople second Caponetts in the markett	x ^d
It a coople of Chickens or Rabbetts the best in y ^e m ^k ett	viiij ^d
It a coople second Chickens or Rabbetts in the m ^k ett	vj ^d
It a dozen pigions the beste in the m ^k ett	x ^d
It e ^v ye man beinge in companie six or more togeather havage to dinner or supper goodd bread and drinke Beefe & Mutton boyled or rost Or els Veale boyled, pigg, beafe, or Veale rost, Or otherwise uppon the fresse dayes havage good bread and drink salt fishe or Salt Salmon Ling, egge & butter, and so in default of one meate havage another to pay for his meale	vj ^d
It a pownde of Tallowe candles made of wicke	iiij ^d
It a fetherbedd for j mā j night & so to departe	j ^d
It a fetherbedd with necessary apparrell thereunto for one mā alone by the weeke	vj ^d
It the like fetherbedd & furniture for Two togeather by the weeke	viiij ^d
It a matterice or flookbedd for one or twoe together by the weeke	iiij ^d
It iiij house loves at the bakers e ^v ye lofe weighing xiiij ozs troie	j ^d
It ij of the same loves in e ^v ye house	j ^d
It a C weighte of good sweete haye beinge cxij ⁿ w th carriage	xij ^d
It e ^v ye bottle of haie weyinge iiij ⁿ	ob
It a load of Strawe for litter w th cariage	iiij ^s vj ^d
It haie & litter day & night for j horse in e ^v ye Inn	v ^d
It in e ^v ye other house	iiij ^d
It good grasse for one horsse day and nighte and so departe	ij ^d
Itm good grasse for one horsse alone by the weeke	viiij ^d

It yff any horse abide in any pasture over and above one day & one night then the owner of the same horse to paye after the rate of the whole weeke for so longe as he shall abide in the same pasture beinge as aforesaide	viiij ^d
Itm a load of Logg woodd w th cariage	iiij ^s vj ^d
Itm a C good fflagotts w th cariage	iiij ^s viij ^d
Itm iij of the same fflagotts in evye house	ij ^d
Itm a load of good brushe Bavens w th cariage	ij ^s vj ^d
Itm a vacant or empty Chamber or Stable by y ^e weeke	iiij ^d
Itm a C of good Oke borde beinge inch borde w th cariage	iiij ^d
Itm a C good Elme borde being inch borde w th cariage	iiij ^s vj ^d
Itm a Thousand Bricke w th cariage	x ^d
Itm a q̄t beste clarett Wine at the vintners	vij ^d
Itm a q̄t best Sacke at the Vintners	x ^d
Itm a q̄ter of Charcoles containing viij bussHELLS w th cariage	xiiij ^d

STAR CHAMBER PROCEEDINGS AGAINST THE EARL OF SUFFOLK AND
OTHERS.

THE following account of the proceedings in the Star Chamber in 1619 against Thomas Howard, Earl of Suffolk, the lord treasurer, the countess of Suffolk, and Sir John Bingley, I have copied from a manuscript volume to which I have been allowed access by the kindness of Henry John Pye, Esq., of Clifton Hall, near Tamworth. The book appears to be a kind of commonplace book in which various members of the Pye family entered from time to time extracts from books or pamphlets, copies of letters, and any other matters which seemed noteworthy in public affairs. Some of these entries are, I believe, in the handwriting of Sir Robert Pye of Faringford, who in July 1618 was made remembrancer of the exchequer and who died in 1662. Others are entered by his son Robert, who married Anne, the daughter of John Hampden, and who sat in the parliaments of 1654 and 1657 as member for Berkshire. He died in 1701. The commencement of the subjoined account appears to be in the handwriting of the elder Sir Robert and is continued and concluded by a clerk or secretary.

A. P. PERCEVAL KEEP.

In Camera Stellatâ coram Concilio ibidem decimo tertio die. Novembris Anno decimo Septimo Jacobi Regis. Presentibus Dño Caç. Angt Archiepo Cant, Duce Lenox, Ep̄o London, Marchõe Hamilton, Ep̄o Winton, Coñte Pembroke, Dño Mountagu Capt. Justic. de Banco Regis, Dño Digby, Dño Hobart Capt. Justic. de Comñ Banco, Thom. Edmonds Mil., Robto Naunton Mil. Secret Rs., Geo. Calvert Mil, Secret Rs., Fulc. Grevill Mil. Canc. Sc̄ii, Edw. Cooke Mil.

THIS day as also ten other sitting dayes this Terme were wholly spent in the solemne and deliberate hearing, discussing and sentencing of the